Novacon 37

Bentley, near Walsall: 2-4 November 2007

Pocket Programme & Read Me

Sci-fi fans on the way

Film fans will be flocking to Walsall next month for a sci-fi convention.

Novacon 37 at the Quality Hotel in Bentley is being held to mark the 50 years since the UK's first science fiction show, in Leeds, attended by legendary writer Arthur C Clarke.

Hundreds of Star Trek and Star Wars fans as well as the genre's top writers are set to attend the event.

Award-winning British writer Charlie Stross is set to attend the convention, which will run from November 2 to 4. More details at **www.novacon37.org.uk**

What better guide to what you can expect this weekend that the report in the edition of *The Wolverhampton Express & Star* dated 8 October? We do hope you've remembered to pack your deluxe *Star Wars* trading cards and spare pair of pointed ears. Please note light-sabres and phasers must be be left at our Registrations Desk.

Back in the real world, we'd like to welcome you to Novacon 37, Britain's longest-running regional ~~sci-fi~~ science fiction convention.

This booklet is intended to complement the Novacon programme book, including the latest details on our various panels and presentations, food and drink prices and the questions for this year's sf GCSE examination.

Programme Notes

All details are accurate at the time this pocket programme went to press. Unless indicated otherwise, all programme items take place in the Oliver Cromwell Suite.

Friday, 2 November

17:00 – 18:30 **Afternoon Matinee** for those arriving early

19:00 – 19:30 **Opening ceremony**, followed immediately by...

19:30 – 20:30 **Friday Night With(out) Jonathan Ross**
Our traditional chatshow slot, light and lively.
Steve Green
with special guests Charlie Stross, Martin Tudor

21:00 – 22:00 **Thank Cthulhu It's Friday**
Party time: free books, free booze, free food, plus book signings and launches.

22:30 – 00:30 **The Friday Night Fright**
The UK convention premiere of William Winckler's homage to 1950s monster movies, *Frankenstein Vs The Creature From Blood Cove*, heads up our late-night bill of thrills, gills and chills. Oh, and a certain homicidal stuffed toy named Eddie.

Saturday, 3 November

10:00 – 11:00 **Bug's TAFF Slideshow**
Bridget Bradshaw launches our morning programme with the latest instalment of her adventures in the United States, representing the TransAtlantic Fan Fund. (And don't forget to pick up a ballot form so you can vote in the 2007 race!)
Bridget Bradshaw

11:30 – 13:00 **Book Auction**
Your annual opportunity to rid your shelves of all that really dodgy sf and fantasy you bought in an unguarded moment, then fill all those ugly gaps with more of the same – plus all those really rare items you've been hunting down for years.
Chris Morgan, Roger Peyton

12:30 – 13:30 ***Interzone* Presentation**
Award-winning author Geoff Ryman joins *Interzone*'s Roy Grey to outline the history and current plans of Britain's leading science fiction magazine.
[This "fringe" item will be held in the Netherton Room, adjacent to the Novacon artshow.]
Roy Grey, Geoff Ryman

13:30 – 14:30 **Portrait of the Artist**
Where do sf artists seek their inspiration? Where are the best markets for their work? How is digital technology affecting the role of the artist? Discuss.
David Hardy, Sue Jones,
Colin Langeveld, Chris Morgan [moderator]

15:00 – 16:00 **Guest of Honour Speech**
Charlie Stross discusses his literary roots, his current works-in-progress and then answers your questions.
Charlie Stross

16:30 – 17:30 **Science Fiction Magazines: On the Rack?**
Before the explosion in sf and fantasy publishing, magazines provided a vital link and common ground between members of our community. Indeed, would there have even been one without them? But do they have any role left to play in the 21st Century?
Roy Grey, Mark Plummer, Geoff Ryman,
Andy Sawyer, Peter Weston [moderator]

18:00 – 19:00 **Big Brother's Binoculars**
Britain has more CCTV cameras per capita than any other nation on Earth, but recent research casts

doubt on whether they actually work. Gordon Brown is pressing ahead with a colossally expensive identity card scheme – compulsory in all but name – which many independent experts suspect will prove yet another IT catastrophe. What are the ramifications of the UK becoming a surveillance society?
Peter Harrow, Tony Keen [moderator],
Ken MacLeod, Harry Payne, Charles Stross

19:30 – 21:00 **Saturday Night at the Movies**
Our annual parade of the weird and wonderful in independent film will this year feature a truly global line-up, including movies from Singapore, Belgium, Britain and the United States.
[Please note certain of the material screened may not be suitable for younger children.]

21:30 – 23:00 **The Transported Fan**
Roll up, roll up, for Novacon's magical mystery tour into the world of illusion and prestidigitation, led by a team of professional smoke and mirror manipulators. And sorry, Mr Berry, this year's chair is not prepared to have his head sawn off again.
Ray Bradbury
with special guests Dave Oakley, Saxon Tylney

23:30 – 00:30 **Novacon 37 Pub Quiz**
Discover if any of your brain cells have survived the past 36 hours with our traditional challenge. Dealer room vouchers are on offer for the winning team.
Dave Hicks [emcee]

Sunday, 3 November

10:30 – 11:30 **The One With the Rocket on the Cover**
Blow out the mental cobwebs with an engrossing visual voyage into the fascinating history of science fiction illustration. Warning: may contain rockets.
Julian Headlong, Peter Weston

12:00 – 13:30 **Art & Crafts Auction**
All weekend, you've been eyeing that really spectacular painting or sculpture in the artshow. Now's your chance to snap it up! How else are the artists here this weekend going to cover their bar bill?
Chris Morgan, Roger Peyton

14:00 – 15:00 **The New Optimism in British Science Fiction**
Once stereotyped as a breeding ground for post-apocalyptic dystopias and twisted visions of the inner landscape, British sf may even be outpacing its American cousins in its embrace of space opera and society's interface with cutting-edge technology. But is anything uniquely British surviving our invasion of the international stage?
Eric Brown, Catherine Pickersgill [moderator], Andy Remic, Charlie Stross, Ian Watson

15:30 – 16:30 **Seventy Years and Counting…**
It's seven decades since a small group of science fiction fans met in a hall in Leeds, and it's doubtful any of them could have predicted how the form they helped create would mutate in the intervening years. How will conventions adapt to the demands of the 21st Century? What traditions – if any – do we need to protect? Will there even be a Novacon 47?
James Bacon, Steve Green [moderator], Hayley Niuserre, Greg Pickersgill

17:00 – 18:00 **Awards Ceremony**
As Novacon 37 enters its final hour, we announce this year's Nova Awards, hand out our raffle prizes, thank all those who helped out this year and then bid farewell for another twelve-month. Just in time for Helena Bowles to remind everyone to grab a discounted Novacon 38 membership on the way out.

19:00 – late **Post-Convention Meal & Beer Tasting**
The horror, the horror...

Where to Find Us

Registrations is located in the hotel foyer, immediately between the entrance and the bar. It will be manned from 16:00 until 18:30 and from 19:30 until 22:00 on Friday; from 10:00 until 15:00 and from 16:00 until 18:00 on Saturday; from 11:00 until 14:00 on Sunday.

Main Programme is in the Oliver Cromwell Room (turn right as you leave the bar; it's at the end of the corridor).

The Dealers' Room is located in the King Charles Room (halfway down the corridor between the bar and main programme). Opening hours will be posted on the door.

The Artshow is split across the Sedgley and Brierley Rooms (turn left as you leave the bar; they're just past the staircase).

In addition, Dave Lally will be rummaging through his video archive in the Dudley Room; full details will be posted outside.

The Netherton Room (next to the artshow) is available for independent meetings and presentations; please contact Registrations or the Duty Committee Member if you wish to arrange a slot.

Food & Drink

We've arranged for both a real ale and a real cider to be on tap in the bar: Black Sheep and Addlestones, at just £2.30 per pint. Alternatives are Worthington (£2.30), Murphy's (£2.50), Carling (£2.30) and Grolsh (£2.50), house wine (£2.60 per glass or £12.00 per bottle), tea or coffee (£1.50), cola or plain lemonade (£0.85 for a 10oz glass), OJ & lemonade (£1.60). Don't forget the free drinks at Friday's party!

Breakfast will be served from 08:00 until 10:00 on Saturday, until 10:30 on Sunday and from 07:30 until 09:30 on Monday. Those who miss breakfast (this is Novacon, after all) will be issued with a voucher exchangeable for a baguette in the bar.

Lunch will served from 12:00 until 14:30 on Saturday, and until 13:00 on Sunday. A selection of baguettes will be available at £2.25 (a half-baguette will cost £1.15) on Saturday, as well as the option of a trip to the salad bar (£2.25), soup and roll (£1.85), jacket potato with filling (£2.10) or the Chef's choice of hot dish (£7.50). Baguettes will also be available on Sunday, as well as a one-course carvery (£7.95).

Dinner will be served from 18:00 until 21:00 on Friday, and until 21:30 on Saturday. A main course will be available at £7.50, with a desert at £1.75 (additional £9.50 options will be on Saturday's menu).

Our popular "midnight baps" return on Friday and Saturday: you can choose from bacon, sausage, chips or vegetarian, all at £1.75.

Our Customary Warning

"Please remember the Quality Hotel is in the business of selling accommodation, drink and food for profit. Neither the management of the Quality Hotel nor the Novacon committee will approve of people 'crashing' in rooms they haven't paid for, and / or smuggling food / drink into the hotel. The Novacon committee will obviously support the hotel in any dispute with members of Novacon caught 'crashing' and / or 'smuggling'."

Beer Tasting & Sunday Meal

Our traditional post-convention meal has a Caribbean flavour this year: Jerk Chicken; Curry Mutton; Peppers filled with Marjoram and pineapple risotto; White Fish, Peppers, Onion & Cajun Seasoning; Rice & Peas; Roasted Sweet & New Potatoes Fried Plantain and Mixed Vegetables; Spinach Avocado & Orange Salad; Spiced Sultana Coleslaw; Rice, Coconut & pineapple Salad; Tropical Fruit Salad with Toffee Cream; Vanilla Cheesecake with Warm spiced Mango and Paw Paw in Malibu Syrup. Tickets are £9.50, available from Registrations.

Tickets for the beer tasting are available at £5.00 apiece or – much better – in exchange for three bottles of beer, the odder the better.

Badges

Please ensure you wear your convention badge at all times. Anyone not displaying a badge and who is not recognised by either committee members or staff will be barred from our function rooms.

Duplicate Room Keys

The Quality Hotel does not normally issue a duplicate room key when two people share, but has agreed to set this facility up for a maximum of 100 rooms. It is imperative you advise the reception desk of your need for a second key when you check in (or at least, as soon as you read this and return to the reception desk).

Gophers

Gophers are the lifeblood of conventions such as Novacon. If you'd like to discuss helping us out this year, please visit Registrations.

Novacon Raffle

As usual, we'll be raising money over the weekend for the RNIB's Talking Books for the Blind programme. We have some great prizes up for grabs, so please give generously.

Hotel WiFi

The Quality Hotel offers a selection of internet packages through wifi4real, ranging from £5 for one hour to £15 for the entire week-end. Full details are available from the reception desk.

General Certificate of Science Fiction Education

Vernon Brown, administrator

On the next few pages you will find a GCSE Question Paper. You should also find a loose A4-sized answer sheet in your membership pack; if not please contact Registrations.

This is a multiple-choice quiz, with a built-in draw. Each question has been given several answers, only one of which is correct. They are often abbreviated, because giving them in full would make the correct answer too obvious. You must match your answer to one of the given ones. It's a bit like being given specifications for making a key, together with five different locks. If the key is made correctly it will fit one of the locks; if it's not, it won't.

Instructions:

1. There are three Sections to the Paper – Section B is easy, Section A is medium and Section C has harder questions. You have to submit two Sections, one of which must be Section A. If you submit Sections A&B, you may obtain an Ordinary Level GCSE Certificate; if you submit Sections A&C, you may gain an Advanced Level GCSE Certificate. Pass mark is 40% and every Certificate is graded.

2. Read each question, decide on your answer and match it to a given answer. When you've answered as many questions as possible, decide whether you will submit Sections A&B or Sections A&C. If all three are submitted, it will treated as an Ordinary Level entry. Please submit under your own name (precociousness is one thing, giving a certificate or draw prize to an infant is another).

3. The answer paper has numbered and lettered squares which correspond to the questions below. Carefully BLOCK OUT (with black or blue ink, ballpoint or felt tip) the squares corresponding to your chosen answers. Please DO NOT circle, cross or otherwise mark the squares, or use pencil, because the marking mechanism will not be able to cope with it and your paper will be rejected. If you make a mistake, put a large X through the incorrect square.

4. Similarly, block out the square corresponding to the Level you are submitting (A&B *or* A&C) and PRINT your name and address, which will be used as an address label if you do not collect your certificate during Novacon.

5. Post your entry in the GCSE box at Registrations no later than 19:00 on Saturday, but watch the GCSE posters for any alteration to this deadline. All papers submitted will be entered into a free draw.

6. Collect your results from me on Saturday evening or Sunday, and find out whether you have been awarded a certificate and possibly also won a prize.

7. Finally, results will be advised directly to you; no one else will know how you have done unless you tell them. So please have a go, you may be better than you think.

Section A

1. What is the "opposite" sentiment to FIAWOL?
a. FANNISH; b. FEN; c. FIJAGH; d. TAFF; e. TANSTAAFL

2. Which film was subtitled "Or: How I Learned To Stop Worrying and Love The Bomb"?
a. ABLE; b. BTE; c. DS; d. WOTW; e. WWT

3. Which UK pop singer and environmental campaigner appeared in the film *Dune*?
a. Amanda; b. Dr Rap; c. Jackson; d. Sting; e. TJ

4. Which 1968 film was based upon "The Sentinel" by A C Clarke?
a. JIS; b. LR; c. ST; d. TASO; e. VOTM

5. Where are the Sliding Doors in the film of the same name?
a. Chemist; b. Hotel; c. Laboratory; d. Lift; e. Underground

6. In "Childhoods End", what do the aliens look like?
a. Angels; b. Devils; c. Mice; d. Snakes; e. Wasps

7. In H G Wells novel who are the enemies of the Eloi?
a. Demara; b. Lamella; c. Morlocks; d. Norns; e. Vor

8. At the end of the film *Planet of the Apes,* what wreckage is seen?
a. Bus; b. Eiffel Tower; c. Flying Saucer; d. Statue of Liberty; e. Tank

10. In the film *Frequency*, the son is a cop. What is the father's job?
a. Author; b. Dentist; c. Firefighter; d. Lawyer; e. Paramedic

11. In the 1976 film of *Logan's Run*, at what age does one never get older?
a. 25; b. 30; c. 35; d. 40; e. 55

12. Who are the Hugo Awards named after?
a. ASH; b. HG; c. HGT; d. HGW; e. JJ

13. In which decade did the term "Robot" first appear?
a. 1880s; b. 1890s; c. 1900s; d. 1910s; e. 1920s

14. In which story does a survivor wearing a dead civil servant's jacket begin the reunification of the USA with some messages?
a. CC; b. L; c. M; d. TP ; e. WF

15. How did "The First Men in the Moon" (HGW 1901) get there?
a. Antigravity; b. Cannon; c. Comet ; d. Explosion; e. Rocket

16. The Turing Test tests for what?
a. Age; b. Alien possession; c. Intelligence; d. Life; e. Parasites

17. In *The Death of Grass*, what causes it to die?
a. Climate change; b. Mutation; c. Pesticides; d. Virus; e. Warfare

Section B

18. Which H G Wells novel was set mainly in AD802701?
a. AMU; b. TIM; c. TTM; d. WITA; e. WOTW

19. To which decade does Michael J Fox go in *Back to the Future*?
a. 30s; b. 40s; c. 50s; d. 60s; e. 70s

20. *The Empire Strikes Back* was a sequel to…?
a. COS; b. M; c. ST; d. SW; e. TGE

21. Which freedom fighters were led by Roj Blake?
a. AC; b. BS; c. DC; d. IM; e. VV

22. In the film *The Day of the Triffids* (1963), what kills them?
a. Parasites; b. Radiation; c. Seawater; d. Snow; e. Sunlight

23. Who organised the first Novacon?
a. ASFG; b. BSFG; c. LC; d. LSFG; e. OUSFG

24. How many leagues under the sea did Jules Verne write about?
a. 5,000; b. 10,000; c. 15,000; d. 20,000; e. 25,000

25. How many "Laws of Robotics" were there originally?
a. 2; b. 3; c. 4; d. 5; e. 6

26. What colour is the Clangers' moon?
a. Red; b. Orange; c. Yellow; d. Green; e. Blue

27. Who was Dan Dare's batman?
a. Alfred; b. Digby; c. Harold; d. James; e. Jeeves

28. In *The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy*, what is the name of the Paranoid Android?
a. Deep Thought; b. Hal; c. Maria; d. Marvin; e. RUR

29. How do triffids communicate with each other?
a. Pollen; b. Rattles; c. Scent; d. Tendrils; e. Touching

30. Ray Harryhausen is best known for his…?
a. Book editing; b. Novelisations; c. Paintings; d. Research; e. Special effects

31. In E R Burroughs book's, which planet is called Barsoom?
a. Earth; b. Jupiter; c. Mars; d. Mercury; e. Venus

32. How many legs has a hexapod?
a. 3; b. 4; c. 6; d. 8; e. More

33. Flash Gordon's main enemy was called…?
a. IM; b. MTM; c. SM; d. TJ; e. TTB

Section C

18. What was Georges Melie's 1902 epic called?
a. ALL; b. ATTM; c. JTFL; d. LVDLL; e. VEAM

19. *The Island of Dr Moreau* is about…?
a. Animal experiments; b. Debauchery c. Immortality;
d. Rocketry; e. Utopia

20. Where was the first ever science fiction convention held?
a. Bradford; b. Chicago; c. Leeds; d. London; e. Paris

21. When was the first ever science fiction convention held?
a. 1933; c. 1937; c. 1941; d. 1945; e. 1947

22. Who wrote the story on which the 1951 film *The Thing from Another World* was based?
a. ACC; b. AEVV; c. IA; d. JWCJ; e. KV

23. In which 1940s novel does the hero find himself in an sf-based world?
a. FIY; b. HBP; c. JW; d. TATA; e. WMU

24. What Is The One With A True Fan At The Handle?
a. TBBB; b. TC; c. TMM; d. TTB; e. VOTF

25. Which fannish "Order of Chivalry" was formed in 1957?
a. LOBE; b. MOM; c. SFHOF; d. TKOSF; e. TOOF

26. What is the full title of the novel known as *Frankenstein*?
a. BFAHC; b. FLIT; c. FOASR; d. FOTMP; e. TFM

27. *Aelita* was written by…?
a. Lang; b. Shaw; c. Tolstoy; d. Trotsky; e. Wagner

28. Upon which play is the 1956 film *Forbidden Planet* based?
a. RAJ; b. RUR; c. TCT; d. TG; e. TT

29. In the 1926 film *Metropolis*, what destroys the workers homes?
a. Fire; b. Floods; c. Hurricane; d. Subsidence; e. Warfare

30. In which of his stories did HGW first envisage atomic warfare?
a. The Land Ironclads; b. War in the Air; c. The World Set Free;
d. Wheels of Chance; e. War of the Worlds

31. What is "jaunting" (Bester)?
a. Hunting; b. Sailing; c. Singing; d. Telepathing; e. Teleporting

32. How many stigmata did Palmer Eldritch have?
a. 3; b. 4; c. 9; d. 13

33. Who writes the "Honor Harrington" novels?
a. DD; b. DW; c. GRD; d. HBP; e. SMS

34. Atul, flar-ke, flar-ta and basiks are native to which planet?
a. Caspak; b. Eran; c. Hydrot; d. Marduk; e. Nashua

Nova Awards

You'll find a copy of this year's Nova Award voting form in your membership bag. Completed forms should be placed in the official ballot box, located outside the main programme no later than 23:59 on Saturday. The winners will be announced on Sunday afternoon.

Film Programme

Although the written word has always been at the core of Novacon programming, we do try to unnearth a few curiosities from the world of international cinema for your entertainment.

For full details, check out the A4 sheet in your programme pack.

This year's publications were produced by Paper & Print, Stratford Road, Solihull. Novacon 37 would like to thank Phil, Mark and the rest of the P&P team for all their hard work.

Please raise your glasses to three absent friends…

Our honorary co-presidents, Brian W Aldiss, Harry Harrison and the late Bob Shaw (captured by Jim Barker circa 1979)

Novacon 38

...will be held at the Quality Hotel on 14-16 November 2008, with the British science fiction author Ian R MacLeod as guest of honour.

Membership costs £34.00 if taken out during Novacon 37. The room rates are £38.00 per person per night for twins / doubles, £50.00 per night for singles. Please note that singles are extremely limited; if you need one, we recommend booking as a matter of urgency.

Watch out for further updates at *www.novacon38.org.uk*.

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